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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 977

Offered February 19, 2007

Commending the United States Army's First Infantry Division.

Patron—Lingamfelter

WHEREAS, the First Expeditionary Division of the United States Army was officially organized on June 8, 1917, and the first units began sailing for Europe a week later to participate in World War I; on July 6, 1917, the First Expeditionary Division was redesignated the First Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, on the morning of October 23, 1917, the first American shell of the war was fired on German lines, and in April 1918, the First Infantry Division achieved the first American victory of World War I when the division attacked and held the French village of Cantigny; and

WHEREAS, the First Infantry Division, widely known as the Big Red One, has ever since fought this nation's battles with bravery, skill, and heroism; and

WHEREAS, the First Infantry Division entered combat in World War II in late 1942 as part of Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, which was the first American campaign against the Axis powers; and

WHEREAS, after six months of fierce fighting in Algeria and Tunisia, the men of the Big Red One moved on to play a key role in Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, storming ashore at Gela on July 10, 1943, at the very center of the Allied attack and bearing the brunt of German and Italian counterattacks over the next several days; and

WHEREAS, on D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Big Red One was again in the center of the action, landing at Omaha Beach and suffering horrible casualties, yet persevering to capture the beachhead and later lead the drive across France to the October 1944 siege of Aachen; and

WHEREAS, following Allied victory in Europe, the First Infantry Division remained in Europe as an occupation force and during the Cold War, its troops supported operations in pursuit of international justice and were among the first to confront Soviet expansionism; and

WHEREAS, on July 12, 1965, soldiers of the Big Red One were the first infantry division to be deployed in Vietnam, landing at Cam Ranh Bay and Vung Tau; and

WHEREAS, by November of 1965, the Division maintained a formidable military presence in Vietnam consisting of five contingents: Division Headquarters at Di An, the 1st Brigade at Phuoc Vinh, the 2nd Brigade at Bien Hoa, the 3rd Brigade at Lai Khe, and Division Artillery at Phu Loi; and

WHEREAS, for five long years, the First Infantry Division's crucial mission was to completely disrupt enemy activity; courageous new recruits and seasoned veterans pushed through dense jungles and remote villages to battle a tenacious enemy; and

WHEREAS, the First Infantry Division's next major deployment was for the 1991 Persian Gulf War, where in just 100 hours, the Big Red One fought through 260 kilometers of enemy territory, destroyed 550 enemy tanks and 480 armored personnel carriers, and took 11,400 prisoners; and

WHEREAS, the Persian Gulf War ended on February 28, 1991, and the First Infantry Division stood guard as the surrender agreements were negotiated between the coalition forces and Iraq on March 3, 1991; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-to-late 1990s, units from the First Infantry Division were in Bosnia and Kosovo conducting peace support operations and ensuring compliance with withdrawal and disarmament agreements; and

WHEREAS, the brave soldiers of the Big Red One have participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom in a number of different roles and missions; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 and 2004, the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the First Infantry Division was involved in many operations in the Sunni Triangle including training the 60th Iraqi National Guard Brigade and sponsoring more than \$23.8 million in civil projects in Al Anbar Province; and

WHEREAS, the courageous soldiers of the Big Red One have made outstanding and invaluable contributions to the defense of the United States and the cause of freedom around the world over the course of the 20th century and into the 21st; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the First Infantry Division on the occasion of its 90th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the First Infantry Division in honor of the bravery and sacrifice of the thousands of men and women who have served their nation as part of the Big Red One.

INTRODUCED

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